1: Ingrams G-5 (1934-35)1936 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

mean that his position *vis à vis* the Confederation is wholly negligible. The influence that an individual ruler exerts over a confederation of tribesmen depends to a large extent on the personality of the individual and I found plenty of evidence that Sultan 'Ali bin Mansur is universally respected, admired, and held in affection amongst the Shenafir tribesmen. Even though his word is not universally law his services are much sought in mediation between different factions, and there is no lack of factions in the Confederation. Along the length of the valley from the east of Shibam to the east of Tarim, which is considered Kathīri, village after village is a small city-state on its own. It is difficult to pass from one to another, even now that the motor-car has come, without the traditional *siyar* or escort.

Typical of the situation has been the state of war that has existed for some time between the Āl 'Umar and Āl 'Amr clans. They have centred round the respectably-sized town of Al Ghurfa between Shibam and Seiyun. Five or six years ago some of the tribesmen of the Āl 'Umar started interfering with the inhabitants of Al Ghurfa. Bin 'Abdat, the *'aqīl* of the Āl 'Amr, protested to Salim bin Ja'fer, the *'aqīl* of the Āl 'Umar, and proposed that they should unite to make peace in Al Ghurfa. Hitherto disputes in the town were commonly referred to the settlement of one Sheikh Bā Abūd, but this arrangement appears to have broken down. Bin 'Abdat informed Bin Ja'fer that if he would not help him, he (Bin 'Abdat) would establish control in the town himself. As Bin Ja'fer did not give him support he took action himself and established order. The new state of affairs was not popular, and probably resulted in some further disorder which had its repercussions beyond local limits. At this juncture the Qu'aiti *wazir* came to Shibam and brought pressure on Sultan 'Ali bin Mansur to unite with him and Salim bin Ja'fer in compelling Bin 'Abdat to vacate Al Ghurfa, and retire to his original place outside. Sultan 'Ali bin Mansur marched against Bin 'Abdat with one gun and some troops; Seiyid Hussein, the Qu'aiti *wazir*, also brought a gun and some troops from Shibam, Salim bin Ja'fer brought his own men, and the three forces collected at Al Ghiyel. The town of Al Ghurfa was bombarded, and, as it was described to me, " they had a good battle but without success ".

Seiyid Hussein, the *wazir*, retired after having successfully complicated the issue, and Sultan 'Ali immediately followed suit, leaving Bin 'Abdat and Bin Ja'fer to fight it out together. Both sides entrenched themselves. The elaborate system of fortifications and communication trenches, still visible at Al Ghurfa, reminded me strongly of France. They extend over nearly a mile, and in this small patch of the valley both sides lived an uncomfortable life for several years. Any cultivation that was done was done under difficulties, and the fields could only be approached through trenches. Salim bin Ja'fer enlivened the proceedings by importing a sort of armoured car from Java. This is now derelict

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361 Of course we follow this advice. The road runs almost without interruption through magnificent palm plantations and by villages with curious grey-brown mud-built castles, flanked by spotlessly white houses of fine architecture. It is the most prosperous and finest district in Ḥaḍramaut Proper. Its chief centre is el-Ghurfa, a town well-known and important in ancient times, but now reduced to secondary rank by constant wars. We enter the war zone a little way out of Sēwūn. No danger threatens us, however, as the Sultan is neutral in a struggle between groups of families who consider themselves to be independent and who fight amongst themselves for domination in this borderland between the Āl el-Qeᶜēṭī and the Āl Kathīr. A deathly silence reigns in the pretty villages lying close together among gardens of palms. It seems as if we alone are on the road in an enchanted land, whose inhabitants have either vanished or are asleep. Our drivers do not expect the cars to be fired at, but all the same, they keep out of the way of the villages, whence unseen watchers are certainly following our every movement. Before long we come upon trenches cut across the road, which force us to make long detours. The Sultan's soldiers who accompany us point out the villages of three parties at war. Soon they are so mixed up that we can no longer distinguish which is which. The trenches are deep and numerous, and only through them can the people enter and leave their villages and houses and get to their gardens. As all three parties are equally dependent on these magnificent gardens they have agreed amongst themselves that necessary work therein must be kept going.

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We approach the town of el-Ghurfa; it is entirely surrounded by a wall with closed gates, and encircled by broad, deep trenches. The palm gardens extend as far as the wall of the town. The silence is oppressive. In order to avoid a trench we have to go out of our way close by one of the corner gates. The sentries appear to have been asleep, for directly the sound of our motors is audible, cries of alarm reach us from behind the gate. We are only a little further

[On the South bank of the wādī between Sēwūn and Shibām — ANALYST]

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when the gate is pushed open and a group of soldiers rush out with their guns at the attack. Our people are petrified with fright and call out that we belong to the *Dōla* (the Government). Then the guns drop and the sound of a greeting reaches us, but our chauffeurs drive on as fast as possible, so as to escape from this hostile place.

We now enter the district belonging to the third party, with el-ᶜUqda as its headquarters, where the rich Shēkh Sālim bin Djaᶜfar bin Ṭālib lives. We are to pay a call upon him. He gave us a pressing invitation to do so on the outward journey, but, at that time, the Sultan of Shibām, who had undertaken our transport arrangements, gave orders to avoid the war zone. Shēkh Sālim is a Dutch subject; he possesses a great fortune, amassed in Surabaya, and was one of the well-known Ḥaḍramīs of that city.

The country round el-ᶜUqda is a paradise of beauty. White and light-grey palaces, with rows of big windows and fine points and pinnacles along the edges of the roofs, are scattered among the plantations of young palm-trees. Behind this gay green and white colouring is the yellowish-brown of the rock. In the gardens are also many bushes of lemon and pomegranate and papayas. The buildings in which Shēkh Sālim lives are surrounded by a high wall, with a colossal wooden gate covered with sheet iron, which gives entrance to a courtyard. The outposts here have done their duty and given notive of our arrival, and the gate has been thrown wide open and Shēkh Sālim himself, surrounded by soldiers and children, stands there to give us welcome. The pro-Dutch sentiments of the grey-headed Shēkh are well known, and we have no need to doubt for one moment that our welcome here comes from the heart. Conversation is carried on in the Malay language, in compliment to the presence of a government official of Netherlands India. This creates an intimate atmosphere and offers the advantage that the soldiers and children cannot follow what is said. The great *madjlis* of this imposing building becomes speedily filled with a crowd of inter-

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ested people who, according to the custom of the country, may not be excluded. It is a great disappointment for our host, who seems to have a great deal on his mind, that we are obliged to refuse quite definitely his invitation to stay for a few days and that we must really be in Shibām before nightfall. Now that the time is so short, he goes ahead at once. An outspoken talk over the misery here follows on my question why he does not prefer to live in safety in his beautiful house at Surabaya rather than be a virtual prisoner in this his own palace in el-ʿUqda. He would indeed much rather look after his affairs in Java, but must be here now as head of his family and defender of its interests. War has been going on for the past six years, more and ever more blood is shed, and the constantly recurring cry for vengeance removes all prospect of the peace so much desired. It does not appear as if the war can be ended without the intervention of a powerful outsider. He presses the point with the greatst earnestness that our Government should mediate between the contesting parties. England has failed: shortly after the outbreak of the struggle the *wālī* in Aden had proposed a six months' truce and summoned the leaders on both sides. They went and waited at Aden for four months in hope of a solution, and waited in vain. The *wālī* did not understand the matter, his expert assistant went away shortly on leave, and they were soon at the mercy of a corrupt and corruptible Indian interpreter. The leaders of the tribes at war returned to Ḥaḍramaut without having achieved any result. If the Government of Netherlands India would only do so, it could bid hostilities cease without direct intervention, for this reason: the country is full of Dutch subjects having great financial interests in Java. If our Indian Government were merely to threaten, with banishment and confiscation of property, those who did not at once force their families in Ḥaḍramaut to cease hostilities, then peace would be assured. This sounded very logical. Ready interpreters gave a short account of our host's suggestions to the members of the invested garrison, who listened with great interest and

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forces with a caravan. These only go every fortnight or three weeks, but if we had the patience to wait we should then travel with 200 to 300 camels and a strong escort. But we have no time and cannot wait and must try the circuitous route by way of Wādī ʿAmd. As we do not relish the idea of staying in this crammed castle with its sick chief and as we have also a feeling that we are not so very welcome here, we ask permission to go and stay for the night in Diyār Āl Buqrī where we had such pleasant experiences on our journey inland. Our travelling companions, the Sayyids ʿAluwī and ʿAlī el-ʿAṭṭās, who know that Diyār Āl Buqrī is much richer than el-Qaʿūẓa and that a feast will most certainly be prepared for us there, are also attracted to this prospect by the pangs of hunger. We send a messenger in advance to announce our arrival, having first, from the roof of the house, estimated the distance as a walk of from fifteen to twenty minutes.

2. THROUGH TRENCHES FROM ONE BESIEGED CASTLE TO ANOTHER.

Shortly after sundown we set out, a guide goes in front, then follows a camel with our baggage, then we ourselves. The whole garrison accompanies us as far as the gate. Under the covering protection of the castle we go towards a wide, deep trench, which will lead us by a roundabout way to Diyār Āl Buqrī. The enemy outposts appear to have espied us, bullets come in our direction from the rocky plateau above and our escort hurries us on. The trench has many turnings and also side branches and positions made strong with the trunks of palms. Its dimensions are such that it can safely be used by a caravan of camels. For an hour and a half we wade through the loose sand of the winding trench and then reach a region of sand-dunes where our guide loses his way in the pitch darkness; frequently we have to wait whilst he goes on ahead.

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3. A KIND RECEPTION BY A ḤAḌRAMĪ-JAVANESE SHĒKH.

361 Towards eleven o'clock we arrive at es-Sēla, where there are a few tall mud houses but no more palm plantations. Everything is grey-brown again — the soil of the wādī, the houses, 622 the mountain-wall. Shēkh Ḥāmid bin ʿAlī el-Djaʿdī and his brother are the heads of the richest and most prominent family of the village. We had already made acquaintance, at Ḥurēḍa, with these high-spirited young men, whose outward appearance is more Javanese than Arab. They were born in Java of a Javanese mother and were brought up in the beautiful highland of the Preanger district. To Ḥurēḍa, where we met them, they had gone specially to welcome us. The mixture of Arab and Javanese blood has, in this instance, produced men with the proud, beautiful physique of the Arab and the fine, cultivated and modest manners of the Javanese. We are with Dutch subjects here, with whom we feel particularly in 701 sympathy. The armed men of the neighbourhood were 722 summoned to their chiefs' house by a few rifle-shots; one by one they come hurrying, all armed, into the *madjlis*, asking what is the matter. Their minds are set at rest as soon as they are told that it is only a question of doing honour to two guests. Among the soldiers are boys of about twelve years of age; they are reckoned to be full-grown soldiers as soon as they are able to carry a gun. As they sit squatting in the circle, the long, bent points of their *djambīyas* almost stick into their boyish faces. This preparedness for war impresses us and makes us suspect that fighting is of frequent occurrence here, which is indeed the case. Our host tells us that he cannot go outside his house for five minutes without a gun and an armed escort. Only a short time ago his half-brother was shot down beside him whilst they were inspecting their date-gardens; he himself shot down three of their assailants, but the actual culprit got off with a trifling wound in his foot. It is true that peace has just been concluded, but one

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always has to be on one's guard against treachery. In answer to my question whether he likes being here, he replies that he does not. Separated as he is from wife and children in Java, he is only here to defend his family's honour and position, and as soon as he can be spared he will return to his mother-land.

The master of the house himself conducts us to a place where Ḥimyaritic characters have been scratched on a rock and where are also as many as five long, though fairly narrow, basins beside the path. They were, of course, dry for the time being, but appear to be quite serviceable, and were plastered on the inside with a kind of mortar.

4. THE TOWN OF 'AMD, DIFFICULT DISCUSSIONS AND HARD DECEPTIONS.

The way continues for the greater part over the boulders in the *sēl*-bed, which evoke many a groan from our camels. The beasts are weary from the long march in the hot wādī, yet we are ready to stake everything on the attempt to reach ʿAmd before the day ends so that, in the evening, negotiations for our further journey may be started, and then perhaps we may have the luck to get off again after no more than a day's delay. To our pleasant surprise, the 'great man of Wādī ʿAmd, Shēkh ʿAwaḍ bin Saʿūd bin Shamlān el-Djaʿdī, overtakes us on our way. He is a tough greybeard, who is still lithe enough to mount onto his camel's back while it is standing. His greeting is friendly and he insists on my mounting his camel. The Shēkh's right hand, Sālim bin Sallūm el-Djaʿdī, a very loquacious man with a heart-rending voice, sits behind me. We go on at a trot. As we approach ʿAmd the date plantations grow thicker. It is already dark when we pass the big village of Ḥebeb. Our caravan has got somewhat separated through my riding-companion's insistence on keeping our racing camel perpetually at the trot. I am carried along helplessly and in the darkness it is quite an art to keep my seat